SUPERMAN
STARRING IN
ACTION COMICS
75¢
568
JUNE 85
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IT'S ROMANCE FOR SUPERMAN, JIMMY, & LOIS WHEN JIMMY BECOMES THE "AMAZING MATCHMAKER OF METROPOLIS!"
BENDER & BROADWAY

THE HUNGER DOGS.*

YOU CAN NEVER KILL THEM ALL.

JACK KIRBY'S CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT.

A 64-PAGE GRAPHIC NOVEL.

FROM DC COMICS. WHERE LEGENDS LIVE.

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THE WINDBREAKER EXPRESS--AMTRACK'S METROLINER THAT ROLLS THROUGH THE NIGHT BETWEEN CHICAGO AND METROPOLIS...
...BRINGS AMONG ITS PASSENGERS, JINX TURNER, ONE OF A NEW CROP OF ITINERANT STAGE MAGICIANS--
--WHO MAKE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE LATTER TWENTIETH CENTURY LEAVING A TRAIL OF WIDE EYES IN THEIR WAKE...
BUT NOW JINX'S OWN EYES ARE SHUT, AS HIS MIND WATCHES THE IDLE DOODLING OF HIS IMAGINATION--
S-1620
--WATCHES A GENTLE BALLET OF A DREAM WHERE LICKS OF FLAME AND ROCK FLOAT DOWN FROM THE SKY...
...TO LEAVE LITTLE PETALS OF DEBRIS IN THE PATH OF AN ADVANCING TRAIN.
NOW--IS IT COINCIDENCE OR SOMETHING ELSE THAT BRINGS A REAL METEOR DOWN THROUGH A RAILROAD TRESTLE...
...AND ONLY PROVIDENCE THAT CALLS A RED-AND-BLUE STREAK FOLLOWING IT OUT OF THE SKIES--?
1

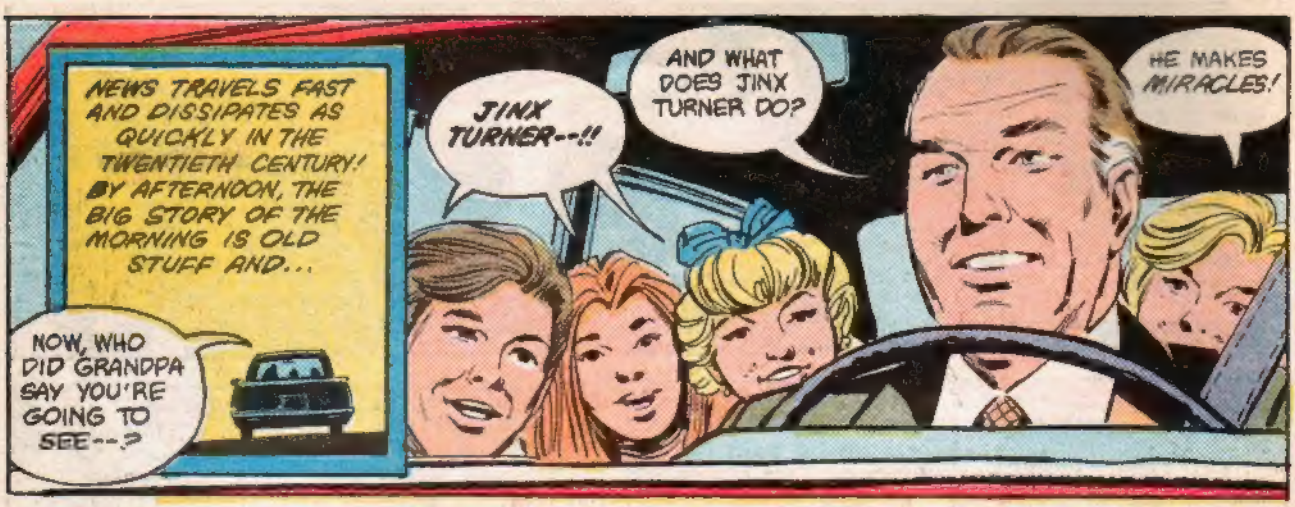
ACTION COMICS 568 (USPS 004-480). Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. Second class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ACTION COMICS, DC Comics Inc., Subscription Dept., P.O. Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, NJ 07024. Annual subscription rate $9.00. Outside U.S.A. $11.00 in U.S. funds. Copyright © 1985 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Advertising Representative: Sanford Schwarz & Co., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017. (212) 391-1400. Printed in U.S.A.
DC Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

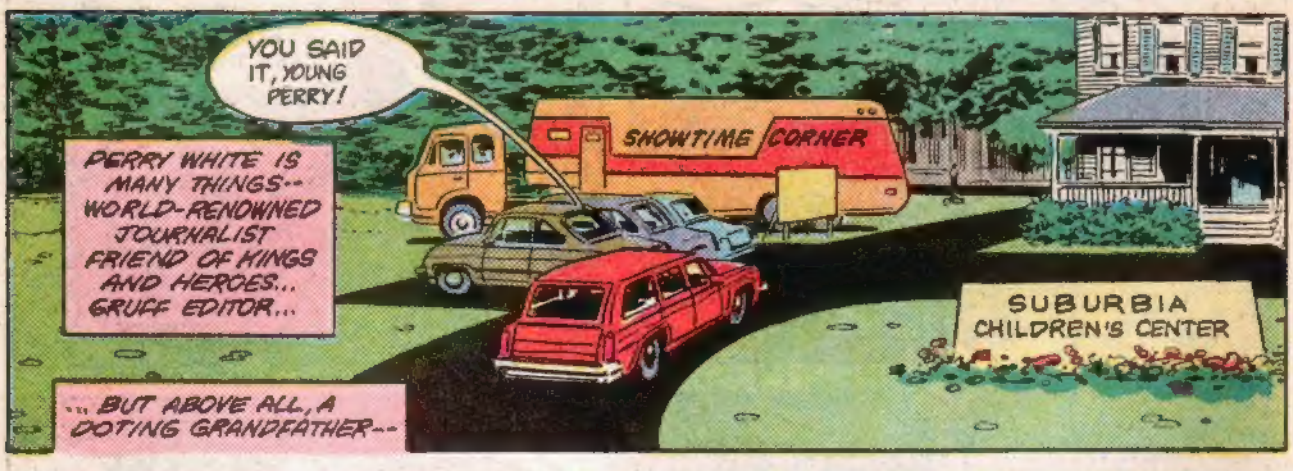
PLEASE DON'T PANIC, LADIES AND GEN-- --URGHFPHH
WHAT IS THIS... A DERAILMENT?!
CARRYING THE TRAIN LIKE A GIGANTIC CATERPILLAR OVER HIS BACK, A MAN OF STEEL FLIPS IT OVER THE GAP IN THE TRESTLE IN A MIGHTY WAVE...
THIS LITTLE NUMBER WILL CAUSE SOME DISCOMFORT AND SPILLED DRINKS INSIDE THE TRAIN...
...AND THOUGH NO ONE INSIDE SEES HIM, NONE CAN DOUBT THAT THIS IS THE WORK OF A...
SUPERMAN
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
...PERHAPS EVEN SOME CUTS AND SCRAPES -- BUT ALL IN ALL IT'S BETTER THAN THE ALTERNATIVE!
2

DISAPPEARING ACT!

WRITER: ELLIOT S! MAGGIN / PENCILLER: CURT SWAN / INKER: AL WILLIAMSON
LETTERER: ED KING / COLORIST: GENE D'ANGELO EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

BY THE DAWN ARRIVAL OF THE WINDBREAKER IN METROPOLIS, TRAIN CREWS HAVE GOTTEN TO WORK ON THE TRESTLE, WORD OF NEAR DISASTER HAS SPREAD, AND AT THE TERMINAL...
HERE THEY COME / LET'S GO!
LET ME THROUGH, PLEASE...
SIR...? I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS!
HEY, LITTLE GIRL-- WANT TO BE ON TELEVISION?
UH, EXCUSE ME... I'D LIKE TO INTERVIEW SOMEONE--
HMM... THAT'S JINX TURNER THE PERFORMER OVER THERE!
I DIDN'T REALIZE HE WAS ON THIS TRAIN.
MR. TURNER! I'M CLARK KENT FROM THE DAILY PLANET AND I--
NO COMMENT! NOT EVEN A LITTLE ONE!
BUT I JUST--
LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE NEAR-ACCIDENT. I WAS ASLEEP AT THE TIME!
I'M JUST PASSING THROUGH TOWN LONG ENOUGH TO DO A CHILDREN'S BENEFIT SHOW AND THEN I'M OFF TO ATLANTIC CITY!
WILL YOU BE GOING BY PLANE NEXT TIME, MR. TURNER?
I NEVER TRAVEL BY PLANE! MUCH TOO DANGEROUS!
GOOD-BYE, MR. TRENT.
ER-- MENT!
3

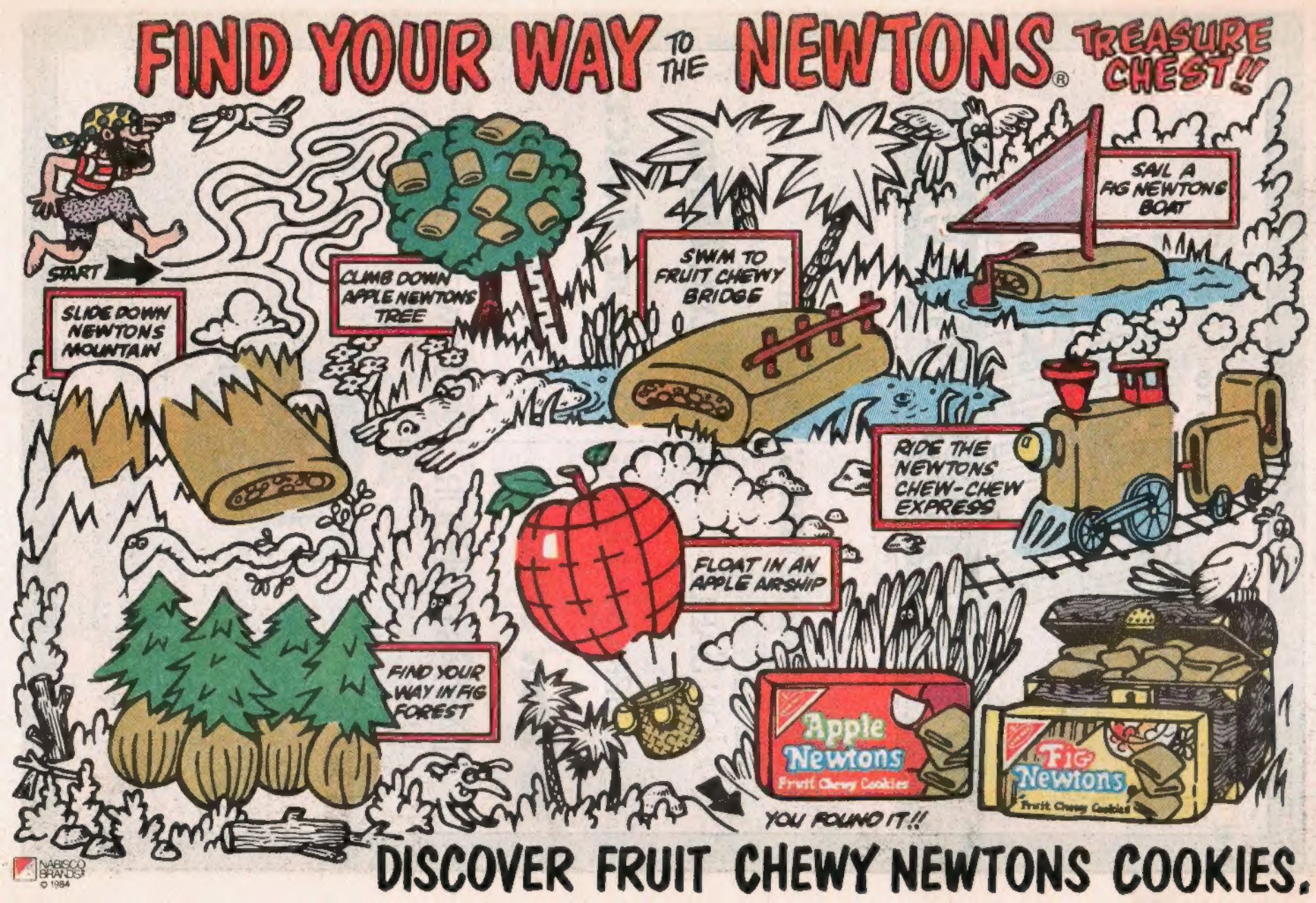

NEWS TRAVELS FAST AND DISSIPATES AS QUICKLY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY! BY AFTERNOON, THE BIG STORY OF THE MORNING IS OLD STUFF AND...
NOW, WHO DID GRANDPA SAY YOU'RE GOING TO SEE--?
JINX TURNER--!!
AND WHAT DOES JINX TURNER DO?
HE MAKES MIRACLES!


YOU SAID IT, YOUNG PERRY!
PERRY WHITE IS MANY THINGS-- WORLD-RENOWNED JOURNALIST FRIEND OF KINGS AND HEROES... GRUFF EDITOR...
... BUT ABOVE ALL, A DOTING GRANDFATHER--
SHOWTIME CORNER
SUBURBIA CHILDREN'S CENTER

HE HAS A LOT TO BE DOTING ABOUT!
MATTHEW-- WATCH OUT FOR YOUR COUSINS!
JEREMY, DON'T SIT ON YOUR BROTHER'S HEAD!
GRETCHEN, DON'T BREAK ANY MORE ARMS OR FINGERS!
I'LL BE BACK BEFORE THE SHOW'S OVER!
MAGIC SHOW TODAY
FEATURING
JINX TURNER
ILLUSIONIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

NOW, WHAT DID I HAVE TO DO INSTEAD OF STAYING AT THE SHOW WITH THE KIDS?
RIGHT--I HAVE TO PICK UP ALICE AND CLARK!
SEEM TO BE FORGETTING THINGS RIGHT AND LEFT LATELY!

MUST BE A LOT OF THINGS ON MY MIND...
...AND IN A MINUTE I'LL REMEMBER WHAT SOME OF THEM ARE!
AND NOW... JINX TURNER!
SHOWTIME CORNER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START
SLIDE DOWN NEWTONS MOUNTAIN
CLIMB DOWN APPLE NEWTONS TREE
SWIM TO FRUIT CHEWY BRIDGE
SAIL A FIG NEWTONS BOAT
RIDE THE NEWTONS CHEW-CHEW EXPRESS
FLOAT IN AN APPLE AIRSHIP
FIND YOUR WAY IN FIG FOREST
Apple Newtons Fruit Chewy Cookies
Fig Newtons Fruit Chewy Cookies
YOU FOUND IT!!
DISCOVER FRUIT CHEWY NEWTONS COOKIES.
NABISCO BRANDS
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BOO!
DON'T APPLAUD SO HARD YET, GANG...
...YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE IN FOR!
THESE WOULD BE PROPHETIC WORDS EVEN IF IT WERE ONLY THE SHOW THAT JINX'S AUDIENCE IS IN FOR--
FOR IN THE NEXT HOUR OR SO, THAT AUDIENCE IS SUBJECTED TO A PHANTASMAGORIA OF WONDERS...
...A WORLD WHERE THINGS ARE NEVER THE WAY THEY SEEM...
...AND THE MOST BASIC NATURAL LAWS SEEM TO YIELD TO THE LORE OF MAGIC--
SO AS THE SHOW APPROACHES ITS SPECTACULAR CLIMAX...
ON THIS STAGE, BEFORE YOUR DISBELIEVING EYES...
...I WILL CONJURE UP A LIVE ELEPHANT...
...OUT OF THIN AIR!
5

AS YOU SEE, I HAVE HERE AN ORDINARY SILK SHEET...
I HAVE NOTHING UP MY SLEEVES--CERTAINLY NO HIDDEN ELEPHANTS--
--BUT THERE WILL BE AN ELEPHANT NONETHELESS...
...AS SOON AS I ROTATE THE PLATFORM TO BRING OUT THE ELEPHANT FROM BACKSTAGE!
AND NOW WITH AN ALAKAZAM--
--AND AN ALAKAZEE...
...AND, ER--
--MAYBE A FEW MORE MAGIC WORDS I HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF YET...
UH-OH! THE PLATFORM'S STUCK!
HEY, JINX, WHERE'S THE ELEPHANT?
THERE'LL BE AN ELEPHANT ALL RIGHT. HE'S JUST KIDDING AROUND WITH US.
YEAH, IT TAKES LONGER TO CONJURE AN ELEPHANT THAN A CANARY, Y'KNOW!
HOW D'YOU KNOW?
OH, GEEZ, THE EQUIPMENT IS JAMMED! THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR ARRIVING TOO LATE TO CHECK IT!
I'VE GOT TO GET THESE KIDS TO SEE AN ELEPHANT!
GOTTA! GOTTA! GOTTA!
6

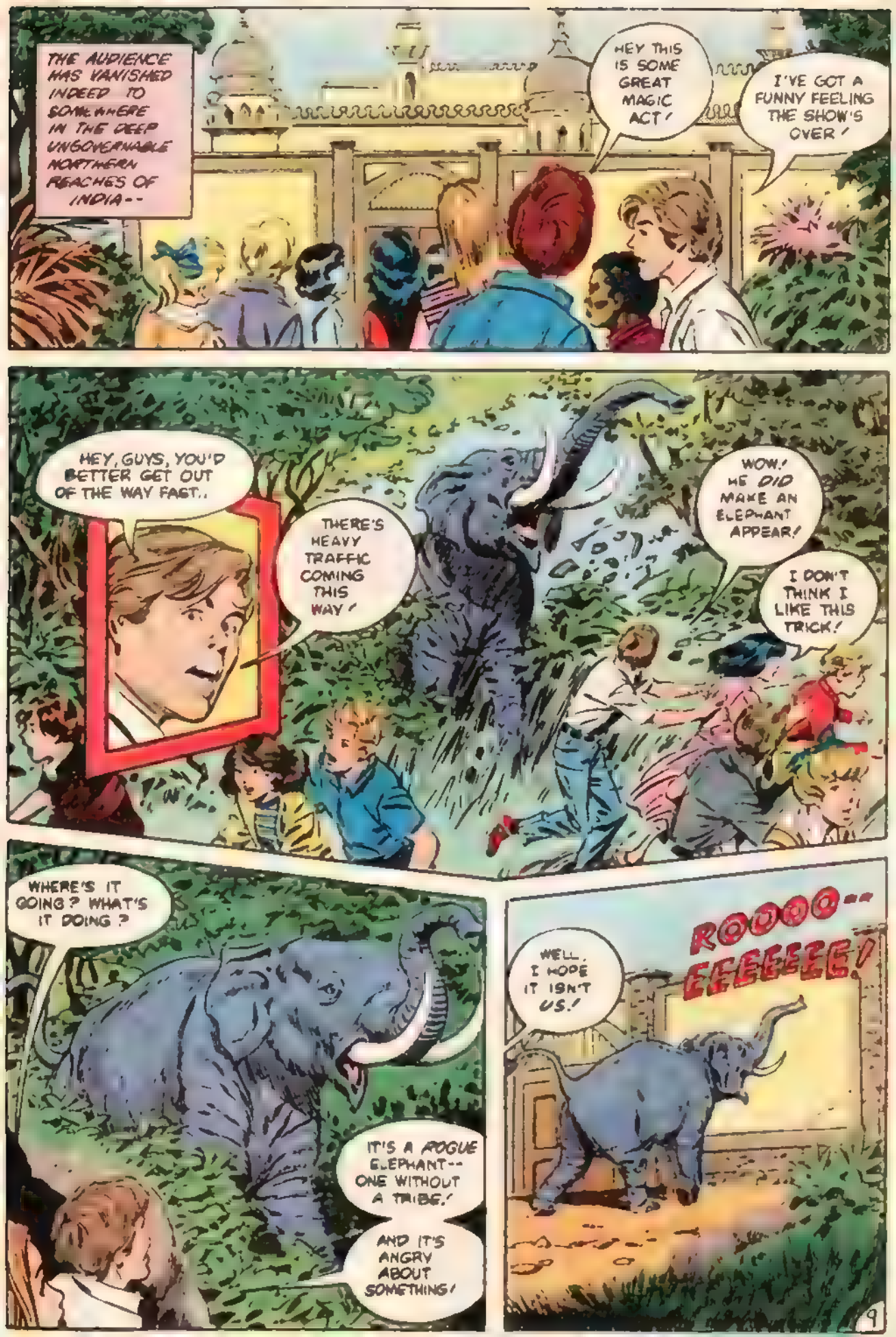
AND JUST ABOUT THAT TIME, DRIVING BACK TOWARD THE CHILDREN'S CENTER...
YOU MAKE A LEFT JUST AHEAD AT THE NEXT CURVE, CLARK... I THINK.!
UH, I BELIEVE IT'S RIGHT... AND A LITTLE FURTHER DOWN, PERRY--
ISN'T THAT WHAT I SAID? A RIGHT?
CLARK IS A TRUSTEE OF THE CHILDREN'S CENTER, TOO, DEAR. HE KNOWS THE WAY.
JUST TRYING TO BE HELPFUL!
NONE OF THE OTHER PARENTS ARE HERE YET, PERRY. ARE WE A LITTLE EARLY?
I GUESS WE ARE. I, ER-- PLANNED IT THAT WAY!
OH, DRAT, PERRY, WE'RE LATE, NOT EARLY! EVERYONE'S GONE! OUR GRANDCHILDREN MUST BE WORRIED SICK!
I'M SORRY, ALICE, HONEY. I THOUGHT... I THOUGHT...
NOW, WHY IS JINX TURNER DOING THAT...?
NO HARM DONE, I BET. WHY DON'T YOU TWO COME OVER HERE WITH ME?
YEAH, ALICE. NO HARM DONE, SEE?
I'M SURE WE'LL FIND OUT WHERE THE KIDS WENT OFF TO SOON ENOUGH.!
7

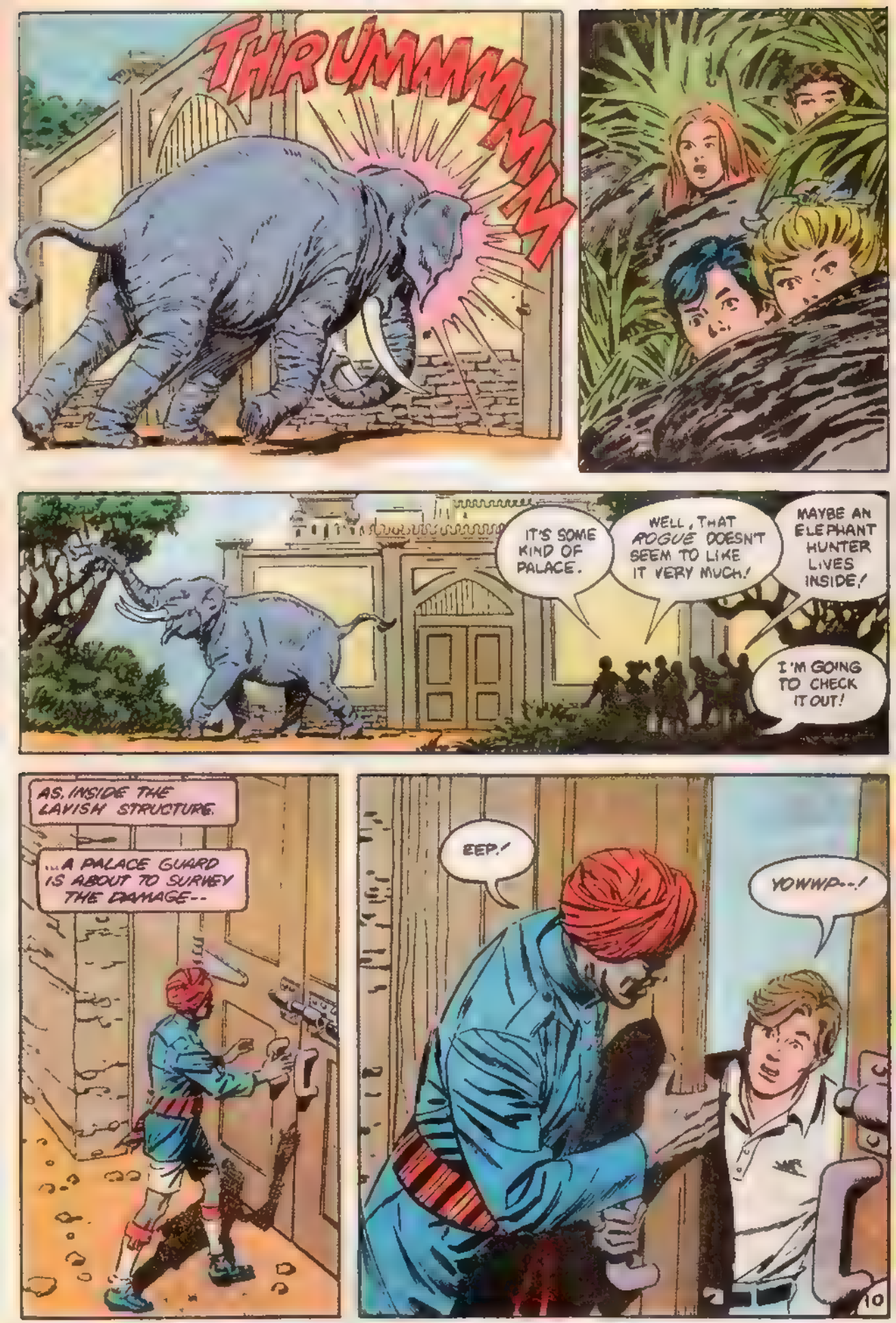
OH, WOE IS ME!
WHAT DID I DO THIS TIME?
RO OO EEEEE!
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH MY GRANDCHILDREN, YOU CRACKPOT?
GRAND-CHILDREN--?
CRACKPOT--?
IF YOU'VE HURT THOSE KIDS, I'LL TEAR YOU LIMB FROM--
PERRY, DON'T ATTACK THE MAN! HE'S NOT SOME KIND OF EVIL SORCERER!
HE'S JUST A STAGE PERFORMER!
OH-- ER... SORRY!
PLEASE EXCUSE MY HUSBAND, MR TURNER. WHY ARE YOU SO UPSET?
MRS.... WHITE, IS IT? IT'S JUST THAT I THINK MAYBE I AM AN EVIL SORCERER!
I COULDN'T MAKE THE ILLUSION WORK...
...SO I CONCENTRATED DEEPLY ON MAKING THE KIDS SEE AN ELEPHANT--
--AND SUDDENLY MY AUDIENCE HAD VANISHED!
THIS SOUNDS LIKE A JOB FOR SOMEBODY OTHER THAN CLARK KENT!
8

"Shadamedafas".

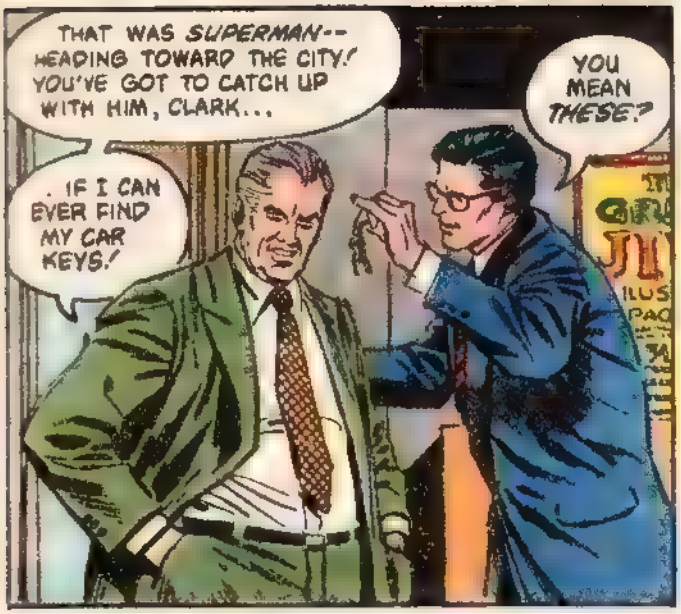
(I TRAVELED 369,484,278,025 MILES FOR REESE'S PIECES.)

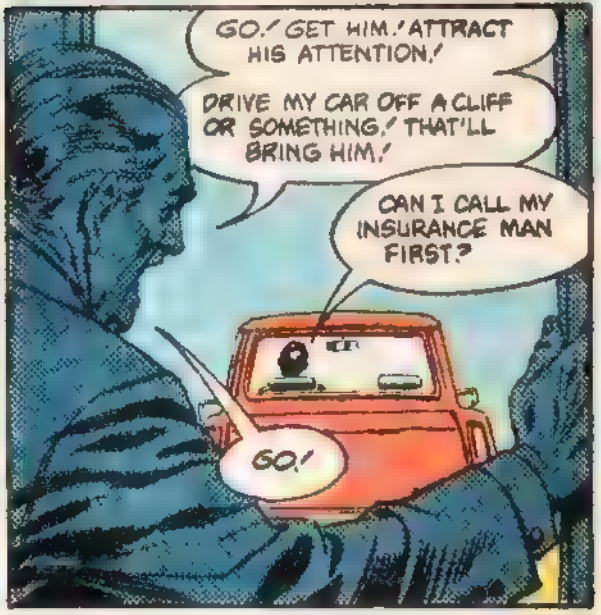
So he buys quite a few to take back with him. He says his mother loves the out-of-this-world peanut butter taste of Reese's Pieces and so does XYTOPUV, his cousin.

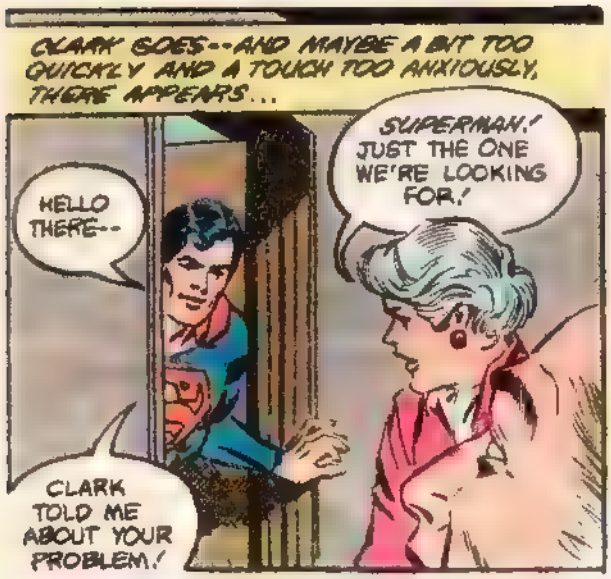

THE AUDIENCE HAS VANISHED INDEED TO SOMEWHERE IN THE DEEP UNGOVERNABLE NORTHERN REACHES OF INDIA--
HEY THIS IS SOME GREAT MAGIC ACT!
I'VE GOT A FUNNY FEELING THE SHOW'S OVER!
HEY, GUYS, YOU'D BETTER GET OUT OF THE WAY FAST..
THERE'S HEAVY TRAFFIC COMING THIS WAY!
WOW! HE DID MAKE AN ELEPHANT APPEAR!
I DON'T THINK I LIKE THIS TRICK!
WHERE'S IT GOING? WHAT'S IT DOING?
IT'S A ROGUE ELEPHANT-- ONE WITHOUT A TRIBE!
AND IT'S ANGRY ABOUT SOMETHING!
WELL, I HOPE IT ISN'T US!
ROOOO-- EEEEEE!

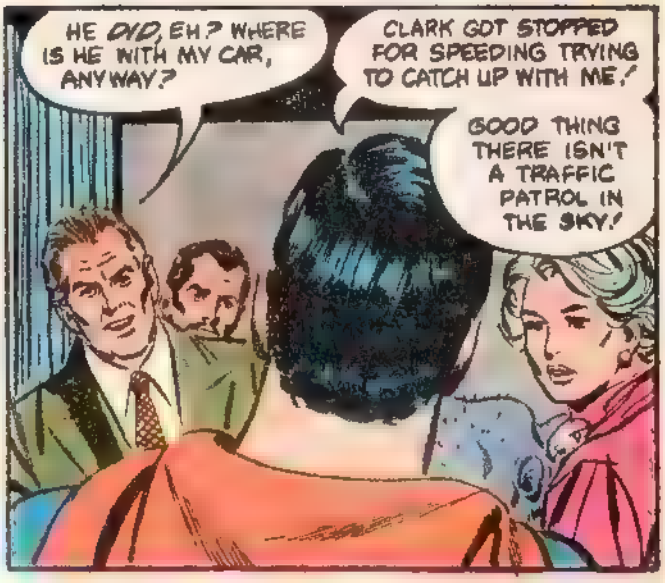

THRUMMMMM
IT'S SOME KIND OF PALACE.
WELL, THAT ROGUE DOESN'T SEEM TO LIKE IT VERY MUCH!
MAYBE AN ELEPHANT HUNTER LIVES INSIDE!
I'M GOING TO CHECK IT OUT!
AS, INSIDE THE LAVISH STRUCTURE...
...A PALACE GUARD IS ABOUT TO SURVEY THE DAMAGE--
EEP!
YOWWP--!
10

HALF A
AWAY...
HERE'S MY POINT, FOLKS! YOU ALL KNOW THIS TRICK!
YOU FILL THIS NEWSPAPER FULL OF MILK AND WHERE IT REALLY GOES IS INTO A BALLOON HIDDEN IN MY SLEEVE...
...EXCEPT THAT THIS TIME THERE'S NO HIDDEN BALLOON--
--AND NOW YOU SEE A CONE FULL OF MILK...
...AND NOW YOU DON'T!
YOU REALLY MADE IT DISAPPEAR -- WITH REAL MAGIC!
IS THAT WHAT YOU DO ONSTAGE AND JUST PRETEND THEY'RE ILLUSIONS?
HECK, NO! I NEVER USE REAL MAGIC ONSTAGE ON PURPOSE! I'M AN ARTIST!
IF THE PUBLIC EVER FOUND OUT I'M A REAL MAGIC MAN...
...EVERY CRACKPOT SCIENTIST ON EARTH WOULD WANT TO DISSECT ME!
DID YOU SEE SOMETHING OUT THERE?
OUT THERE? NO, BUT I HEARD SOMETH--
LOOK! A STREAK OF RED AND BLUE IN THE SKY!
THANKS TO A LITTLE X-RAY REFRACTION OF LIGHT THROUGH THE CLOUDS!
SKY

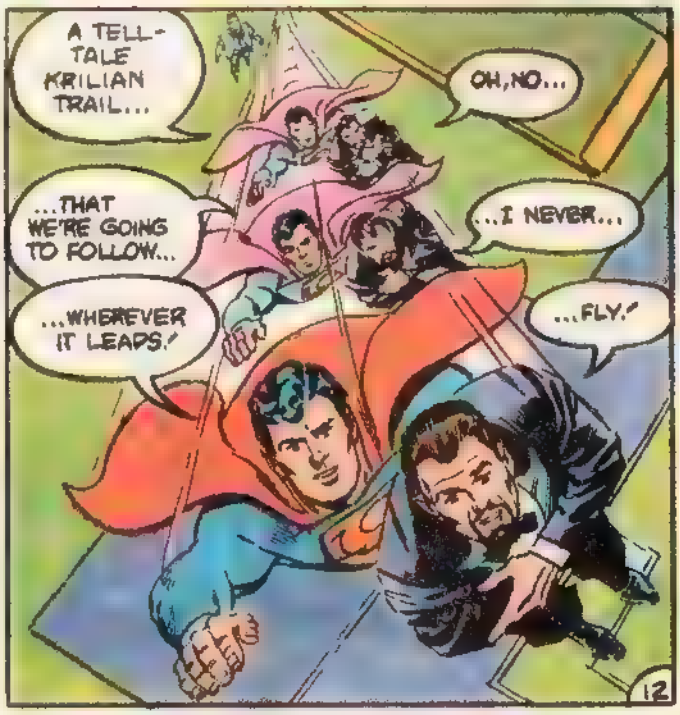

THAT WAS SUPERMAN--HEADING TOWARD THE CITY! YOU'VE GOT TO CATCH UP WITH HIM, CLARK...
YOU MEAN THESE?
. IF I CAN EVER FIND MY CAR KEYS!


GO! GET HIM! ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION!
DRIVE MY CAR OFF A CLIFF OR SOMETHING! THAT'LL BRING HIM!
CAN I CALL MY INSURANCE MAN FIRST?
GO!


CLARK GOES--AND MAYBE A BIT TOO QUICKLY AND A TOUCH TOO ANXIOUSLY, THERE APPEARS...
HELLO THERE--
SUPERMAN! JUST THE ONE WE'RE LOOKING FOR!
CLARK TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM!

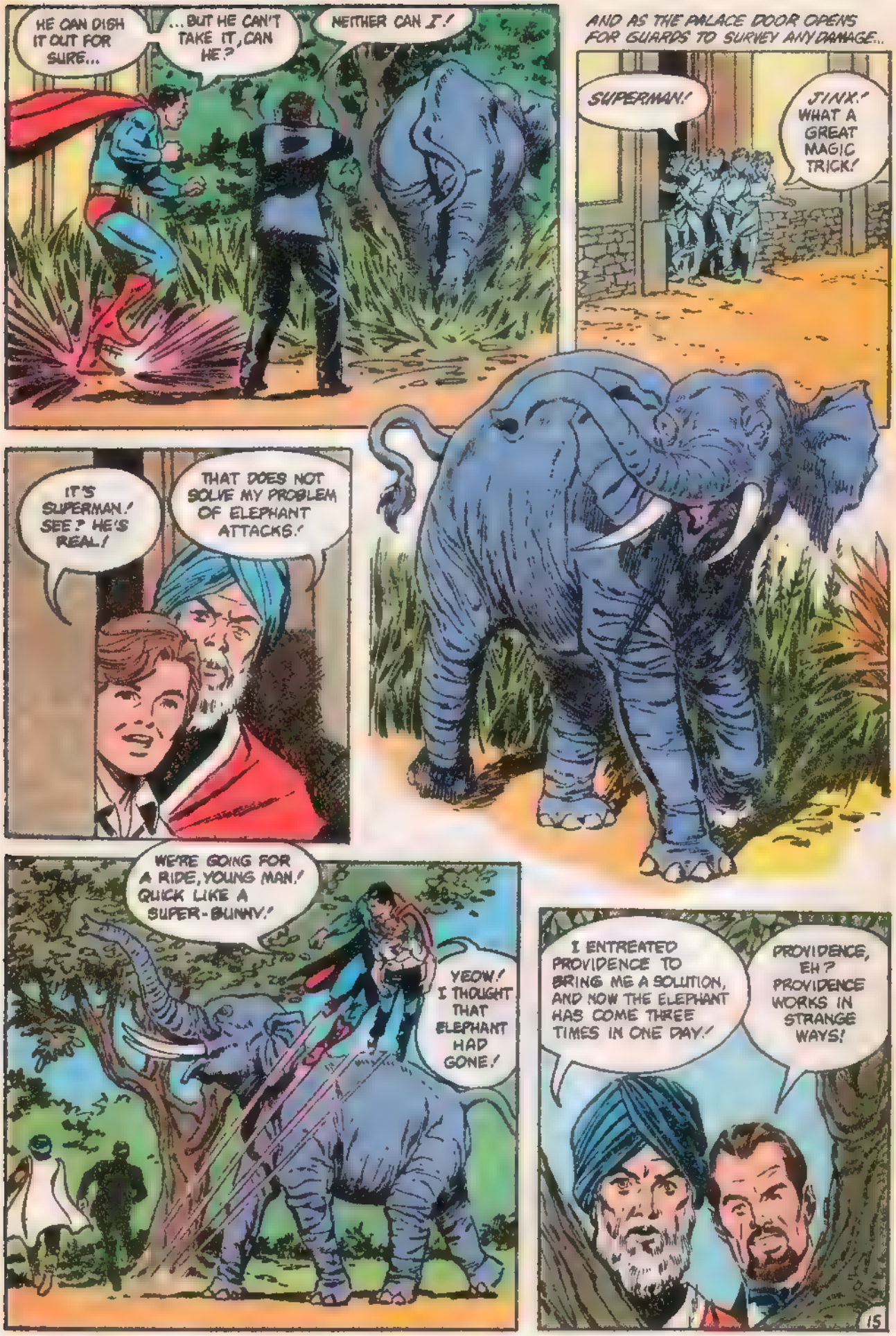

HE DID, EH? WHERE IS HE WITH MY CAR, ANYWAY?
CLARK GOT STOPPED FOR SPEEDING TRYING TO CATCH UP WITH ME!
GOOD THING THERE ISN'T A TRAFFIC PATROL IN THE SKY!

I WONDER IF YOU TWO WOULD STAND BACK WHILE I EXAMINE JINX HERE...
YES--THERE IS A TRAIL LEFT BEHIND!
TRAIL, SIR?

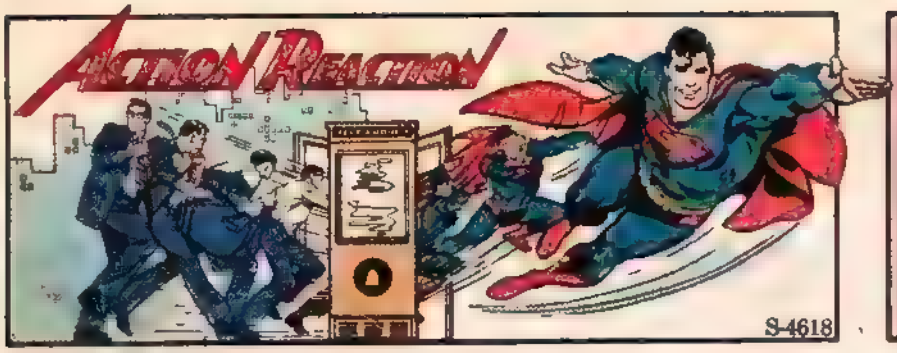

A TELL-TALE KRILIAN TRAIL...
OH, NO...
...THAT WE'RE GOING TO FOLLOW...
...I NEVER...
...WHEREVER IT LEADS!
...FLY!

MEANWHILE, AT THE END OF THE TRAIL...
HEY, DO YOU THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO GO IN HERE?
IT'S BETTER THAN A MAGIC SHOW!
HAVE THEY SAID ANYTHING IN ENGLISH YET?
WELCOME!
I AM MAHARAJAH HERE... AND YOU WERE SENT BY PROVIDENCE TO RELIEVE OUR STRIFE.
BRING ME THE ONE YOU SAW FIRST... THAT ONE!
WHAT IS YOUR NAME, LAD?
P-PERRY WHITE THE THIRD, YOUR RAJAHHOOD!
I MUST WARN YOU, SIR, THAT MY GRANDFATHER IS A FRIEND OF SUPERMAN'S!
SUPERMAN... I HAVE HEARD OF THIS SUPERMAN... A FANCIFUL LEGEND OF THE MYSTERIOUS WEST.
COME FORWARD, BOY!
PERRY WHITE, WE ARE BESET BY DAILY ATTACKS OF A ROGUE ELEPHANT WHO THREATENS TO DESTROY OUR PALACE!
NONE OF MY POTIONS OR ELIXERS HAS BEEN ABLE TO STOP THIS...
...BUT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUMMON YOU TO HELP ME!
WOW! LOOK AT ALL THAT NEAT STUFF!
13

JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO, SULTAN!
TELL YOU!? I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO TELL ME!
BE CAREFUL! THAT IS MY ANTI-LOCUST FORMULA!
ROOOOEEEEEEE
AT THE PRECIPITOUS ATTACK, THE MAHARAJAH BARKS A SERIES OF COMMANDS IN HIS NATIVE LANGUAGE...
..AND THOSE WHO DO NOT KNOW THAT LANGUAGE NEED NO FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT--
--ALTHOUGH ONE MOVES TO SECURE HIMSELF A LITTLE TOO SLOWLY...
YUCHH!
THIS GOOEY JUNK IS ALL OVER ME NOW!
AS, UP IN THE SKY, APPROACHING FROM NOT FAR AWAY...
THAT'S WHERE THE TRAIL LEADS, JINX! I HOPE THE KIDS ARE THERE!
DOES THAT MEAN I CAN GET BACK ON THE GROUND SOON?
SOONER THAN YOU THINK!
ALL RIGHT, BIG GUY...
..LET'S SEE HOW YOU TAKE TO THIS!
14


HE CAN DISH IT OUT FOR SURE...
...BUT HE CAN'T TAKE IT, CAN HE?
NEITHER CAN I!
AND AS THE PALACE DOOR OPENS FOR GUARDS TO SURVEY ANY DAMAGE...
SUPERMAN!
JINX! WHAT A GREAT MAGIC TRICK!
IT'S SUPERMAN! SEE? HE'S REAL!
THAT DOES NOT SOLVE MY PROBLEM OF ELEPHANT ATTACKS!
WE'RE GOING FOR A RIDE, YOUNG MAN! QUICK LIKE A SUPER-BUNNY!
YEOW! I THOUGHT THAT ELEPHANT HAD GONE!
I ENTREATED PROVIDENCE TO BRING ME A SOLUTION, AND NOW THE ELEPHANT HAS COME THREE TIMES IN ONE DAY!
PROVIDENCE, EH? PROVIDENCE WORKS IN STRANGE WAYS!
15

SUPERMAN, THAT ELEPHANT SEEMS TO BE AFTER ME NOW!
NO WONDER! YOU'RE SOAKED IN A CHEMICAL WHOSE ODOR IS DRIVING HIM CRAZY!
NOT TO WORRY...
.. A LITTLE SUPER-SUCTION WILL PUT THE BRUISER OUT OF COMMISSION LONG ENOUGH...
..TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE AND CLEAN THE SMELL OUT OF THE PALACE SO HE WON'T COME BACK!
PROVIDENCE HAS SENT A SOLUTION AFTER ALL!
SOON, IN AN AIRPORT TERMINAL BACK IN METROPOLIS.
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THIS CIGAR, ALICE.. TASTES KIND OF STALE!
IT WOULD HELP TO TURN THE LIGHTER ON, DEAR!
HAVE A GOOD FIRST PLANE RIDE, JINX!
IF THERE'S EVER ANYTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU, SUPERMAN...
WELL, THERE IS SOMEONE-- A VERY GOOD FRIEND... WHO SEEMS TO BE COMING DOWN WITH AN ILLNESS WE KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT.
WHO IS IT? WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?
NOTHING, UNFORTUNATELY-- HE'S EVEN BEYOND MY HELP!
NEXT ISSUE--
WHO WILL PLAY SUPERMAN IN AN ALIEN MOTION PICTURE?
THE ASTONISHING ANSWER WILL BE REVEALED IN NEXT ISSUE'S:
"CASTING CALL!"
ON SALE APRIL 25!
IT'S A DATE!



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Dear Editor,

ACTION #564 got off to a flying start with a striking Eduardo Barreto cover. The moody purples and blues and the intense drama of the scene immediately caught my eye.

"A New Life for Superman" had an exciting opening. Alex Saviuk has great flair for exciting action sequences. Paul Kupperberg's writing was entertaining, if a bit contrived. The *Master Jailer* was used more effectively here than in his last appearance (*SUPERMAN* #393). He looked better too. "Mike Benson's" remarkable stamina was amusing.

This issue's eight-pager, "Run for Freedom," was something completely different. Charlie Boatner's script was excellent. It was chock-full of inspired, original ideas (*Supes'* role as a cosmic slavery-buster was especially good). Howard Bender turned in some of his finest artwork yet; his blending of the traditional and the startlingly modern was very impressive. *Superman's* interdimensional pursuit of the ostrich-necked alien was terrific. Dave Hunt (inks) and Gene D'Angelo (color) were also working at peak form.

"Run for Freedom," along with stories like "Yesterday Once More" and "A Superman of a Different Color" in previous issues, seem to point the direction you're heading in the future. It's a direction I heartily agree with.

Thanks for yet another beautifully crafted issue of *ACTION COMICS*. (And next issue has *Ambush Bug!* Oboy!!)

DAVID PULLEYBLANK
205 Lincoln St.
Denver, IA 50622

In case you didn't already know it, the AMBUSH BUG mini-series is on sale even as you read this. Run, don't walk, back to wherever you bought this issue of ACTION and pick up a copy!—BR

*****

Dear Julie and Bob,

Drat! I should have written a few weeks sooner! Then I could have sent a note of glowing praise for how well the new approach worked in *ACTION* #563 instead of this one complaining about the shortcomings of #564.

"What's wrong with the picture?" asks the first caption on page 6 of "A New Life for Superman." The caption is misplaced. It should appear on page 1. Nothing is wrong on page 6, where the story finally starts to get interesting. But page 1 has a mistake, that being Paul Kupperberg's decision to once again use the gimmick of starting the story in the middle of a fight.

The theory behind this worn-out routine, I assume, is to "hook" the reader with an action sequence before settling down to the story. As a novelty, used once every 5 or 10 years, it might be effective; seen over and over in series after series, this supposed attention grabber begins to have the effect of counting sheep.

Time to say something nice about Paul's story: Pages 6 and 8-14 were nicely done. In a 1960's story, there would have been a lot of far-fetched coincidences about *Superman* costumes (with the words "How ironic!" appearing in every other panel). Paul kept the story of Mike Benson entertaining and believable.

But the ending was weak. *Superman* didn't really do anything to overcome the plot; it simply fell apart because he went along with Dave's suggestion. I expect something more from my heroes.

I expect something more from my villains too. The *Master Jailer* had been warned that his plan would fall apart if *Superman* put his costume on. Why wasn't *MJ* taking any precautions against this happening? A true '60's-style story would have had *MJ* secretly monitoring Mike Benson and warding off any change of clothes with a number of outlandish twists leading to something even more outlandish at the end. An overdose of outlandish twists can get tiring, but the lack of *any* twists gets tiring that much faster. The problem is to bring back the fun, imagination, and ingenuity of the '60's stories without going overboard. The best I can say here is that Paul didn't go overboard.

Charlie Boatner's "Run for Freedom" has similar problems. Charlie began well, with Clark and Jimmy talking about Matthew Brady and the Civil War, then rushed through the opening in order to fill most of the story with action. This was a good chance to bring history to life. Jimmy and Clark should have pictured in their minds events from the days of slavery. For someone working in a visual medium, Charlie's treatment was as unvisual as one could get.

Last issue, all three stories hit the mark; they were good stories. This month both tales fell short. Good luck in the months ahead. You may not always succeed with this new approach, but I'm glad you're making the effort.

ORCHARD WORKER
449 Hillview Dr.
Morgantown, WV 26505

And we're glad you appreciate the effort, O.W., enough to stick with us.—BR

*****

Dear Julie,

Behind yet another excellent Ed Barreto cover lay yet another winning story from the pen of Paul Kupperberg, making *ACTION COMICS* #564 another 65-pence well spent.

I'm not particularly fond of the *Master Jailer*, so I was not expecting to be overly thrilled by "A New Life for Superman." Paul, however, came up with a new and interesting angle on the clashes between *Superman* and the *Jailer*. Not only was the identity-switch an interesting gimmick, but it was incorporated into a well-written, well-paced, and well-dialogued tale. In fact, by story's end, I was rather sorry to see Mike Benson go. Maybe, just maybe, *Superman* could find a use for that identity in a future issue. And the sight of the Action Ace in a shredded costume added drama to the climax. Full marks to Paul again.

While the theme of "Run for Freedom" was a worthy one, I was left cold by the execution of Charlie Boatner's story. The confrontation with the bizarre-looking alien was lacking in drama or excitement, while the chase through dimensions was too casually done. The sentiments expressed at the end were touching, but made to seem contrived by a badly paced eight pages. I wish Charlie well and hope he gets a crack at a lead story.

Despite this negative end to my letter, I repeat that, overall, *ACTION* #564 was well worth the money I spent on it. Until next time, "Look, up in the sky..."

DALE COE
41 Whitecross Rd.
Warrington, Cheshire WA5 1LR

Hey, Dale, that's my closing line! What am I supposed to say now that we're at the end of the column? "Cheerio"?—Bob Rozakis

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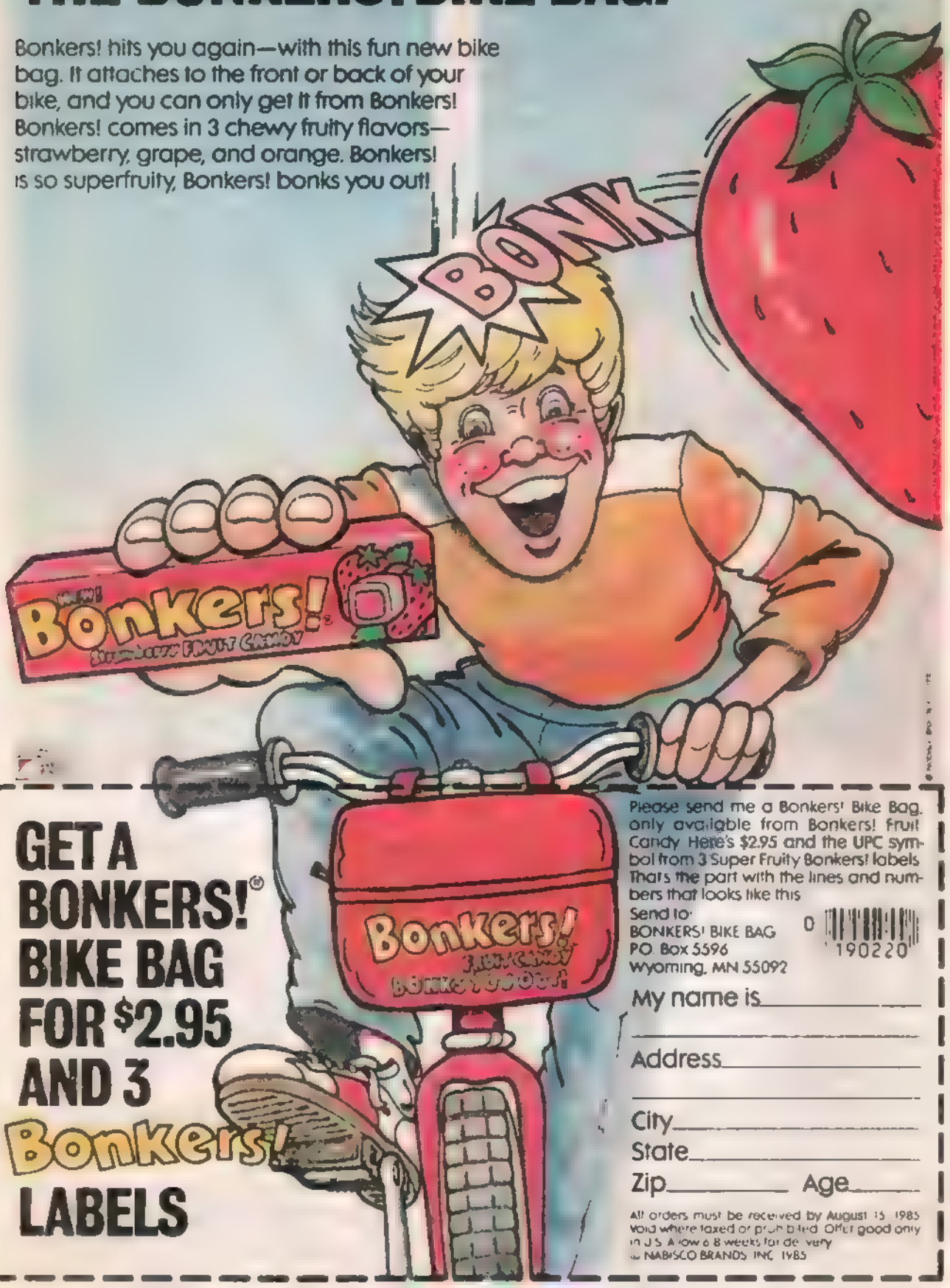

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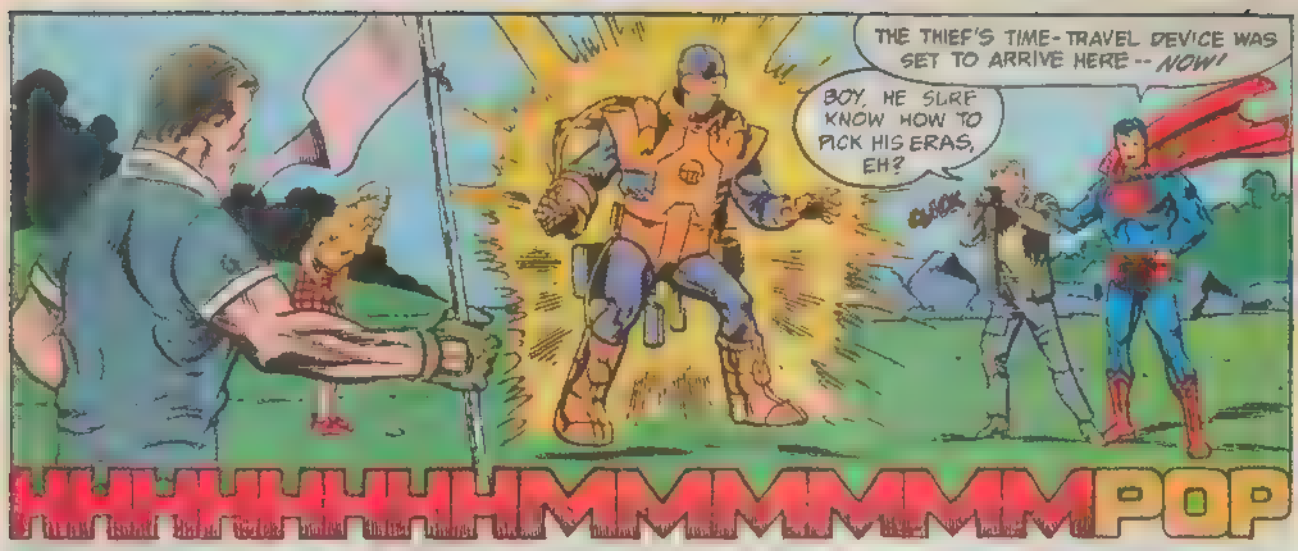
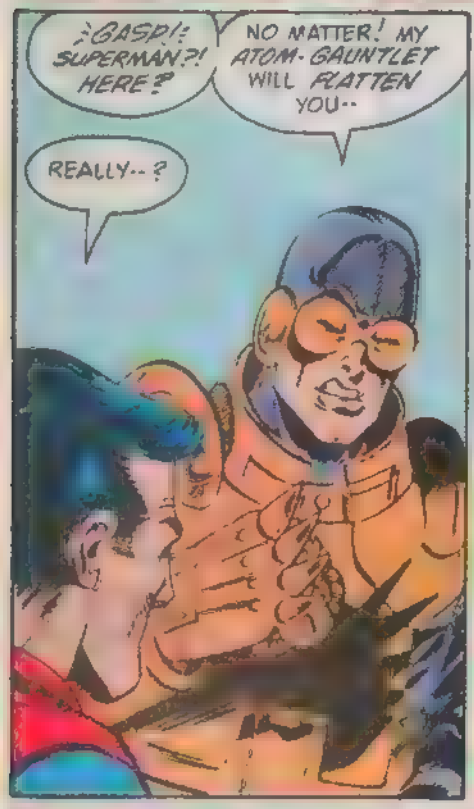
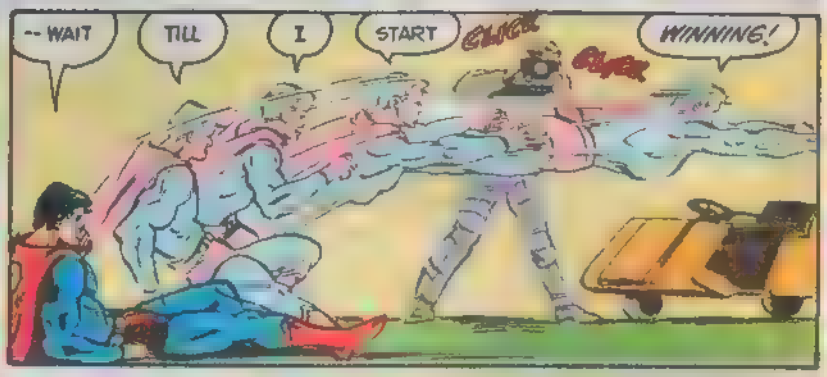
SUPERMAN
WITHIN THE CHEST OF JIMMY OLSEN BEATS THE HEART OF A HOPELESS ROMANTIC! SO IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT PLANET'S RED-HEADED REPORTER WOULD ONE DAY TRY HIS HAND AT PLAYING CUPID! BUT JIMMY NEVER DOES ANYTHING THE CONVENTIONAL WAY, AS HIS FRIENDS DISCOVER TO THEIR DELIGHT... AND DESPAIR... WHEN JIMMY BECOMES...
"THE AMAZING MATCHMAKER OF METROPOLIS!"
TRUST ME, CLARK! YOUR DREAM DATE IS WAITING RIGHT AROUND THIS CORNER!
WORDS CRAIG BOLDMAN
PICT. REX HOWARD BENDER
ART ALEX NINO
LETTERS COLORS BEN ODA GENE D'ANGELO
EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
HMM... JUST WHAT A SUPERMAN NEEDS -- A PERFECT MATCH FOR DULL, TIMID CLARK KENT!
DAILY PLANET
WHAT'S UP, SUPERMAN?
WHY'D YOU RESCUE ME FROM AN AFTERNOON OF STARING AT A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER?
NOTHING MAJOR, JIMMY. JUST A REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES IN THE FUTURE!
A SLIPPERY THIEF STOLE SOME SUPER-WEAPONS AND THEN ESCAPED VIA TIME-CUBE! BUT THE LEGIONNAIRES GOT THE SETTING FROM THE CONTROLS
HE'LL BE ARRIVING HERE! I'VE BEEN ASKED TO PICK HIM UP.
THERE MAY BE A SLIGHT BIT OF DANGER...
...BUT IT SHOULD MAKE GREAT PHOTOS!

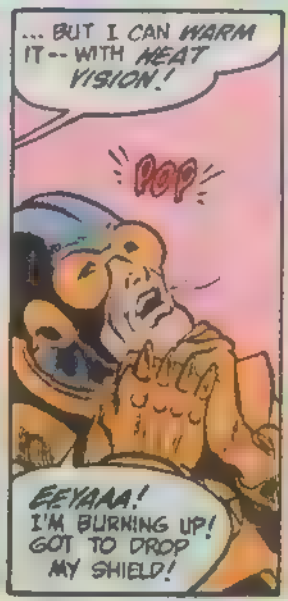

THE THIEF'S TIME-TRAVEL DEVICE WAS SET TO ARRIVE HERE -- NOW!
BOY, HE SURE KNOW HOW TO PICK HIS ERAS, EH?
CLICK
HHHHHHHHHMMMMMMMMPOP

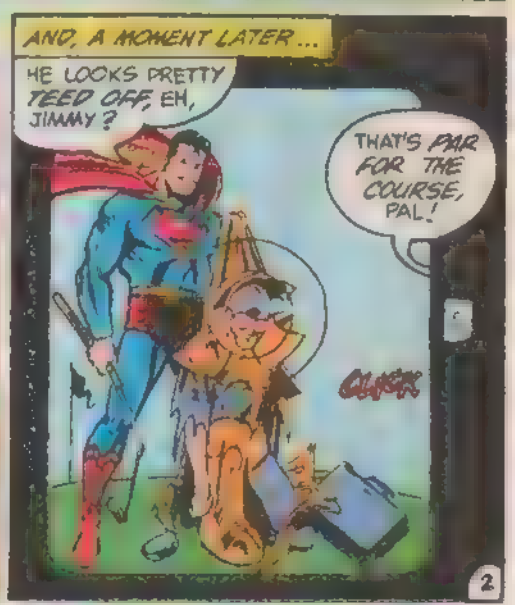

:GASP!: SUPERMAN?! HERE?
NO MATTER! MY ATOM-GAUNTLET WILL FLATTEN YOU--
REALLY--?

POW!
HOLD THE CAMERA, JIMMY--
CLICK


--WAIT
TILL
I
START
CLICK
CLICK
WINNING!

HE'LL BE WAITING FOREVER! YOU CAN'T PENETRATE MY FORCE-FIELD!
PERHAPS NOT...

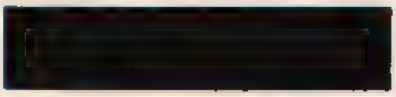

... BUT I CAN WARM IT -- WITH HEAT VISION!
POP
EEYAAA! I'M BURNING UP! GOT TO DROP MY SHIELD!


AND, A MOMENT LATER ...
HE LOOKS PRETTY TEED OFF, EH, JIMMY?
THAT'S FAIR FOR THE COURSE, PAL!
CLICK
2

I'LL TAKE THIS SORRY SPECIMEN BACK TO HIS OWN TIME-ZONE! MAYBE YOU CAN MAKE THE LATE EDITION, JIMMY!
RIGHT!
FLOOP
SUPERMAN LEFT ONE OF THE CROOK'S GADGETS BEHIND!
I'LL HOLD ON TO IT TILL I SEE HIM AGAIN!
AFTER FILING HIS STORY WITH THE DAILY PLANET...
SO MUCH FOR WORK!
I'M NOW OFFICIALLY ON VACATION--
--AND READY FOR FUN! HOPE FIFI'S SET FOR OUR NIGHT ON THE TOWN!
AS JIMMY ARRIVES FOR HIS DATE...
FIFI -- WHAT IS THIS?
OH, JIMMY! I TRIED TO CALL YOU!
BRADLEY HERE JUST CAME INTO TOWN FOR THE DAY AND... WELL, YOU UNDERSTAND!
LET'S PLAN ANOTHER NIGHT!
I'M ALL BOOKED UP!
BAH! SUPERMAN HAS HIS KRYPTONITE! I'VE GOT WOMEN!
LATER, AT JIMMY'S LONELY APARTMENT...
I WONDER WHAT THIS DOODAD FROM THE FUTURE DOES? I CAN'T GET IT TO WORK!
WOMEN! WHERE DO I GO TO MEET THE ONE WHO'S RIGHT FOR ME?
3

SUDDENLY, THE WEIRD DEVICE FLASHES TO LIFE!
YIPE-- WHAT'D I DO?
I'M GETTING A MENTAL MESSAGE TO SHOW UP AT A CERTAIN CORNER IN METROPOLIS TONIGHT!
THIS IS ONE APPOINTMENT I'VE GOT TO KEEP!
8:32, AT THE DESIGNATED SPOT...
GASP! THE MOST RAVISHING BEAUTY I'VE EVER SEEN!
BE STILL, MY HEART!
NO PARKING
THE FEELING SEEMS TO BE MUTUAL...
I... I'LL TRY TO CONTROL MYSELF!
EXCUSE ME, MISS, BUT...
GASP! I FEEL FAINT!
YOU'RE THE MAN I'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF MEETING! I'M JENNIFER CROCKER!
JENNY AND JIMMY! JIMMY AND JENNY! I LIKE THAT!
Restaurant
EVERY MAN HAS A PERFECT MATE SOMEWHERE! APPARENTLY THAT DEVICE FROM THE FUTURE SNIFFS 'EM OUT!
INTERESTING...
NEXT DAY...
JIMMY, I THOUGHT YOU WERE ON VACATION!
LOIS, I MAY NEVER COME BACK TO THE PLANET! HOW DOES "DREAM DATES, INC." SOUND TO YOU?
IT'S MY NEW CALLING!
I'LL TREAT YOU AND CLARK TO A FREE SAMPLE OF MY SERVICE!
A SCANNING BEAM PROBES YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS FOR THE DATE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED...
... THEN AN INVISIBLE RAY SCOURS THE CITY TO FIND THAT PERSON!
4

GUEST MEANWHILE...



BEN ODA REMEMBERED

BY ANDREW HELFER

You probably never thought twice about Ben Oda. He was never interviewed by the fanzines. He was never the guest of honor at a comics convention. Fans never begged him for his autograph. The spotlight never touched him. And there's probably a very good reason for that. Ben Oda was neither writer nor artist nor comic book creator. He was just one of the hundreds of people who put the finishing touches on comics. Ben Oda was, to put it simply, a letterer.

But Ben Oda had a fan club. An exclusive group. We kept its very existence a secret. Instead of calling it "The Ben Oda Fan Club," we called it **DC Comics.** To us, Ben was not only our favorite comic book letterer; he was also our favorite human being. And when he passed away a few weeks ago, we all became acutely aware of a space in our lives that would never again be filled.

Ben Oda was one of an ever-dwindling group of comic book professionals—the "old timers." He worked on comics in their infancy, through their heyday, and right into the present. In the forties, his distinctive lettering style graced the pages of Jack Kirby's early work. In the fifties, when Harvey Kurtzman needed hand-lettering for his now-famous EC war comics, Ben was the man asked to do it. He was a letterer for the **Chicago Tribune** and King Features Syndicate, regularly turning out pages of **Prince Valiant, Little Orphan Annie, The Phantom,** and others too numerous to mention. And until mere days before he left us, Ben was also the most prolific letterer working at **DC Comics.**

Those are the facts—they're easy to tell. What's harder to explain is the way Ben touched us all—every day of his life.

Among other letterers, Ben was the acknowledged master—I remember Tom Orzekowski's delight over being introduced to him some years ago; and Bob Lappan literally **studied** Ben's work with a comprehensiveness that Ben found both flattering and confusing. He never quite understood why anyone would give his work a second glance—as far as he was concerned, his job was simply to make the writer and artist look as good as possible.

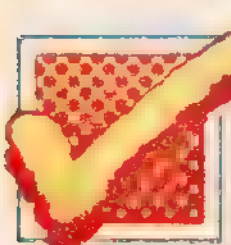
And that's exactly what Ben did so well—twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, or so it seemed. Ben would come into the **DC** offices every day at four-thirty in the afternoon (you could set your clock to it) with a staggering number of lettered pages. If you had a book that needed to be lettered overnight, you just gave it to Ben. Truth to tell, we took him for granted. He was the ultimate pinch-hitter, and he got the **DC** team out of more than one deadline jam. But, like most pinch-hitters, he seldom received the praise he deserved.

And as much as we'd all like to believe otherwise, Ben was no speed demon. He'd work long hours, sit hunched over his drawing board late into the night, all to meet what he undoubtedly felt was a personal commitment to a friend. Sometimes, in his desire to please and help out, he would push himself too far, and the strain would show. Often, the results were hilarious. Once in a while, Batman might "fight a war on crime," and Superman might be referred to as "The Man of **Steel.**" We'd laugh together over Ben's occasional blooper, and seldom think about the sleepless nights he'd put in just to get the job finished. Again, we took him for granted.

But when the job was finally done, Ben would sit himself down in one editorial office or another and just shoot the breeze. This was where you really got to know and appreciate Ben. He could talk about practically anything—World War II and his time in the service (he was a paratrooper, a spy, and a part-time baseball player), his memories of comic book pros he'd worked with in the past, his family, the performance of various players on his Monday night bowling team, and the current state of the comic book field. All his stories and opinions were delivered with such a keen sense of humor that you couldn't help but laugh.

But there was more to Ben than just that. When Ben told a story, he became a kind of Japanese Will Rogers, a homespun humorist with a shy smile that could melt ice. Dozens of wrinkles etched into his face, laugh lines mingling with the ones that simply come with age, Ben often seemed like an ancient yet humane sage, always aware of the humor in life, and enjoying every minute of it. You had only to talk to Ben to see that this was true. His eyes would sparkle with life, and in an almost mystical transference, our eyes would sparkle too.

And perhaps, when all is said and done, this was the most wonderful thing about Ben—his uncanny ability to make us smile, to make us laugh, to lift us out of our late-afternoon doldrums with a simple anecdote or tall tale—to simply **be** Ben. These were his gifts to us, these were the things we took for granted, and these are the things we will miss the most.



☐ **Tales of the Legion 324:** The mind-boggling secret of the Dark Circle is at last revealed!

☐ **Action Comics 568:** In one of two stories, a magician's illusions go haywire!

☐ **Detective Comics 551:** More Darknight danger with the Batman, and all-out action with Green Arrow!

☐ **World's Finest 316:** Cheapjack strikes again, but are Batman and Superman ready for him?

☐ **All-Star Squadron 46:** Are super-powers in store for Liberty Belle?

☐ **Arion 32:** Arion learns the 100,000-year-old secret of his past!

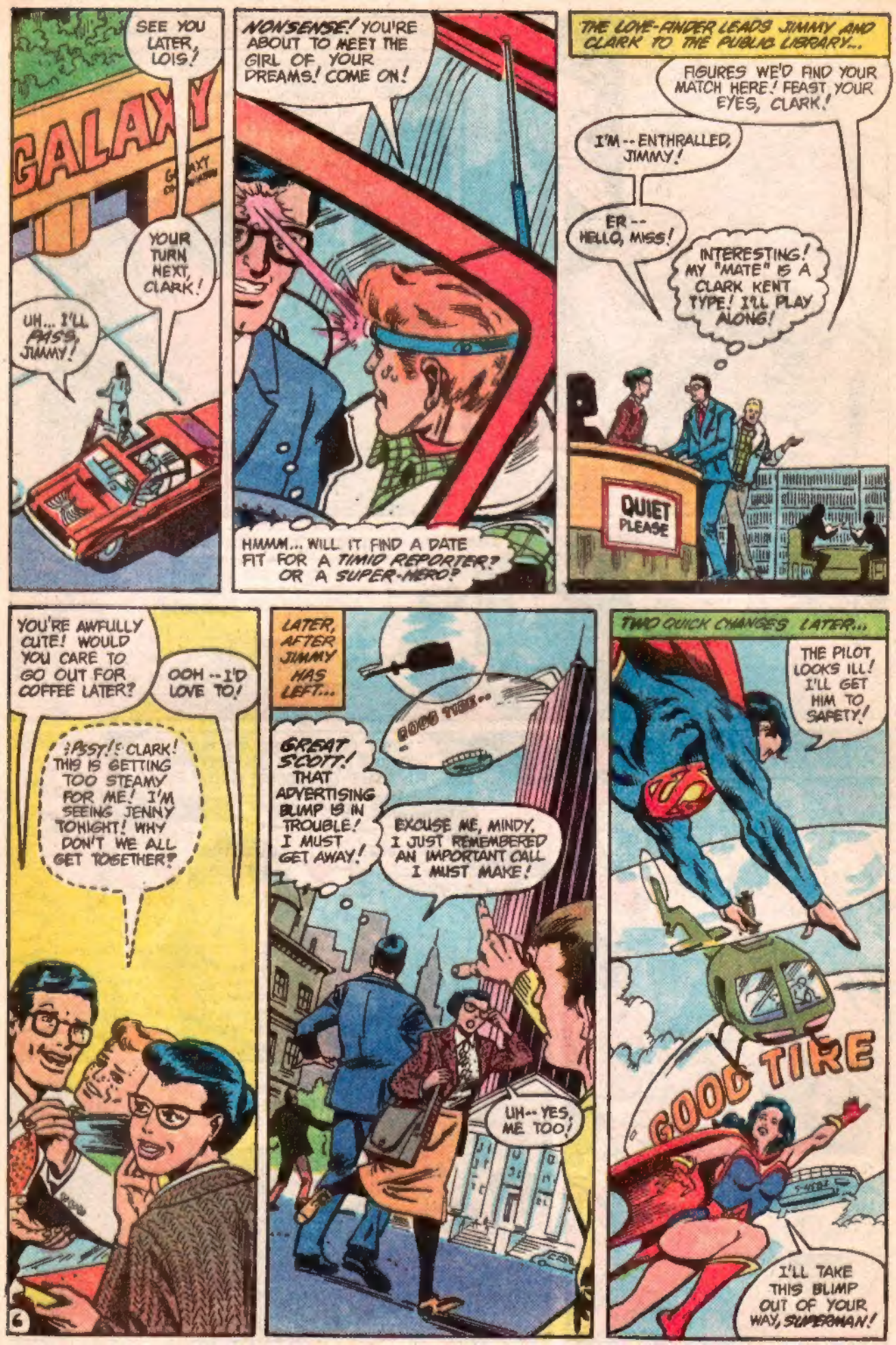
☐ **Jonah Hex 91:** Jonah becomes involved with a rodeo queen!

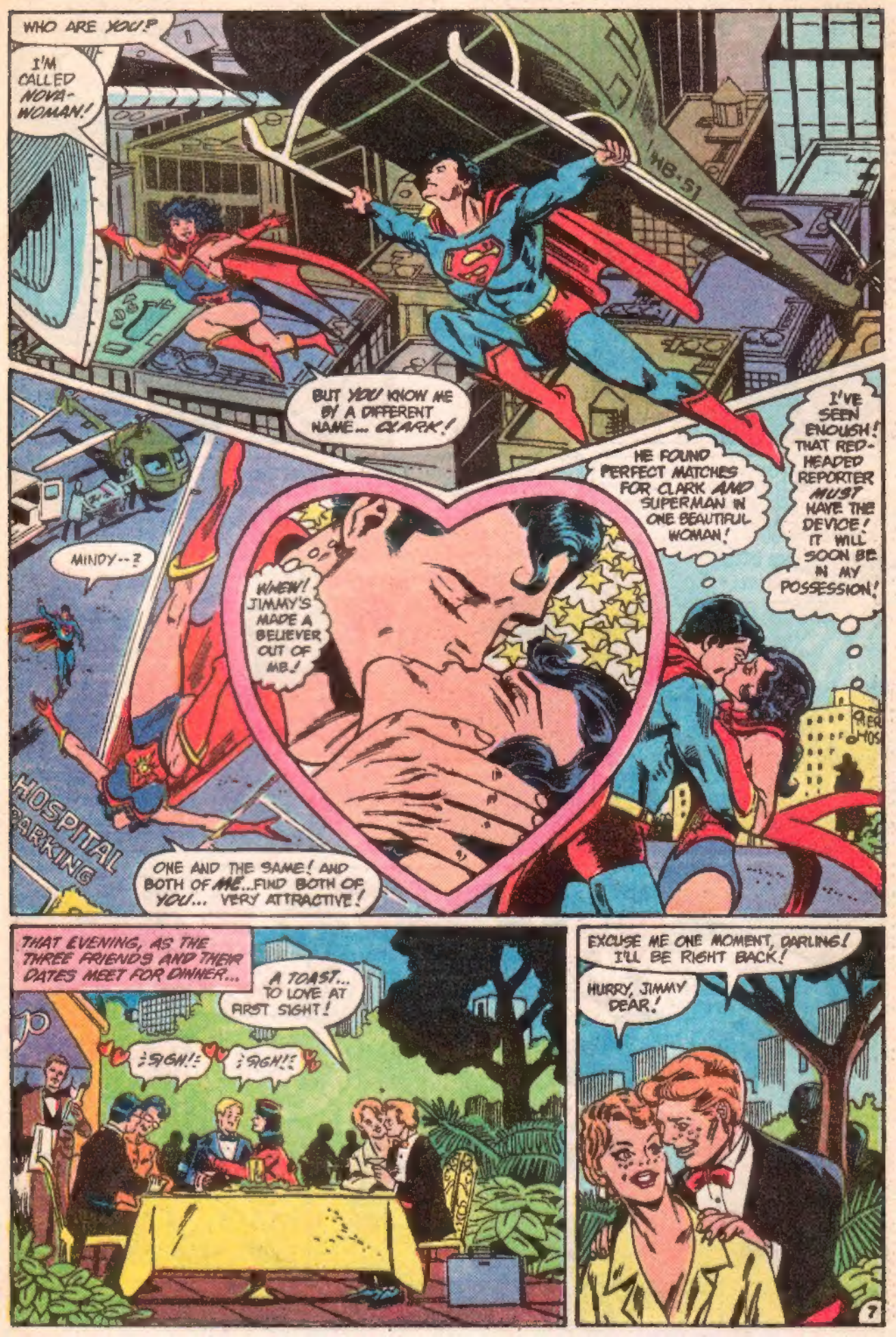
☐ **V"S:** Can the Rebels stop a scientist from blowing up both himself and their plans?

☐ **Sun Devils 12:** The long-awaited final chapter with the ultimate fate of the Starcrusher!

☐ **Ambush Bug 1:** Launching a hilarious four-issue mini-series!

AH! IT'S COMING THROUGH! LET'S GO, LOIS! YOU WANT BLISS, OR DON'T YOU?
COMING, CLARK?
WOULDN'T MISS IT!
MUST BE ONE OF PROFESSOR POTTER'S CRAZY GADGETS!
SOON, AT METROPOLIS' GREASIEST GREASY SPOON...
ACCORDING TO MY "LOVE FINDER," YOUR DREAM DATE IS--ER-- THAT MAN IN THE BEARD OVER THERE!
TH-THAT MAN?! THERE?
SPECIALS
REAL MEAT
MAYBE YOUR GIMMICK NEEDS A TUNE-UP, JIMMY!
BUT CUPID'S ARROW HAS FLOWN TRUE, FOR ..
YOU'RE MS. LANE, THE NEWS-GAL, YES?
EXCUSE ME, CAN I SPEAK TO YOU OUTSIDE?
UH--OKAY, BUT WATCH IT! I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!
AND, HIDDEN FROM PRYING EYES...
MY NAME IS PRESTON CHANDLER! I'M AN UNDERCOVER COP WORKING ON A DRUG CASE!
I'VE ALWAYS... ADMIRED YOU, LOIS! MAY I SEE YOU TONIGHT?
GAH... SURE!
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, CLARK? NOT EVEN SUPERMAN PUT STARS LIKE THOSE IN LOIS' EYES!
SUPER WHO?
AMAZING!
THE ONE WITH THE FRECKLES MUST HAVE THE DEVICE!


SEE YOU LATER, LOIS!
GALAXY
YOUR TURN NEXT, CLARK!
UH... I'LL PASS, JIMMY!
NONSENSE! YOU'RE ABOUT TO MEET THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS! COME ON!
HMMM... WILL IT FIND A DATE FIT FOR A TIMID REPORTER? OR A SUPER-HERO?
THE LOVE-FINDER LEADS JIMMY AND CLARK TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY...
FIGURES WE'D FIND YOUR MATCH HERE! FEAST YOUR EYES, CLARK!
I'M -- ENTHRALLED, JIMMY!
ER -- HELLO, MISS!
INTERESTING! MY "MATE" IS A CLARK KENT TYPE! I'LL PLAY ALONG!
QUIET PLEASE
YOU'RE AWFULLY CUTE! WOULD YOU CARE TO GO OUT FOR COFFEE LATER?
OOH -- I'D LOVE TO!
PSST! CLARK! THIS IS GETTING TOO STEAMY FOR ME! I'M SEEING JENNY TONIGHT! WHY DON'T WE ALL GET TOGETHER?
LATER, AFTER JIMMY HAS LEFT...
GOOD TIRE...
GREAT SCOTT! THAT ADVERTISING BLIMP IS IN TROUBLE! I MUST GET AWAY!
EXCUSE ME, MINDY. I JUST REMEMBERED AN IMPORTANT CALL I MUST MAKE!
UH -- YES, ME TOO!
TWO QUICK CHANGES LATER...
THE PILOT LOOKS ILL! I'LL GET HIM TO SAFETY!
GOOD TIRE
I'LL TAKE THIS BLIMP OUT OF YOUR WAY, SUPERMAN!
6


WHO ARE YOU!?
I'M CALLED NOVA-WOMAN!
HB-51
BUT YOU KNOW ME BY A DIFFERENT NAME... CLARK!
I'VE SEEN ENOUGH! THAT RED-HEADED REPORTER MUST HAVE THE DEVICE! IT WILL SOON BE IN MY POSSESSION!
HE FOUND PERFECT MATCHES FOR CLARK AND SUPERMAN IN ONE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN!
MINDY--?
WHEW! JIMMY'S MADE A BELIEVER OUT OF ME!
HOSPITAL PARKING
ONE AND THE SAME! AND BOTH OF ME...FIND BOTH OF YOU... VERY ATTRACTIVE!
THAT EVENING, AS THE THREE FRIENDS AND THEIR DATES MEET FOR DINNER...
A TOAST... TO LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT!
SIGH!
SIGH!
EXCUSE ME ONE MOMENT, DARLING! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
HURRY, JIMMY DEAR!
7

ALL RIGHT, LADY! LOVE MAY BE BLIND, BUT THAT HASN'T STOPPED ME FROM NOTICING YOU!
YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWING ME FOR TWO DAYS! WHY?
GOOD GRIEF! I WAS TOO-- ER-- PREOCCUPIED TO NOTICE!
I'M SHVAUGHN, THE LEGION LIAISON WITH THE SCIENCE POLICE IN THE 30th CENTURY!
I WAS DISPATCHED TO RETRIEVE A PIECE OF EQUIPMENT THAT WAS STOLEN FROM OUR ERA!
YOU MEAN THE LOVE-FINDER? I HAVE IT RIGHT HERE!
LOVE-FINDER? IT'S A THOUGHT-ACTUALIZER! IT DRAWS IMAGES FROM YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS THOUGHTS AND CONSTRUCTS THEM OUT OF SOLIDIFIED ENERGY!
GREAT SCOTT! HOW DID I MISS THAT?
I'VE SUMMONED MY TIME BUBBLE BY REMOTE CONTROL. I'LL RETURN THE DEVICE TO ITS OWNERS NOW!
SOLIDIFIED ENERGY? BUT THAT MEANS--
FAREWELL!
--OUR "DREAM DATES" ARE NO MORE THAN THAT! DREAMS! ;GROAN; THEY'RE FADING AWAY!
NO DOUBT THE DEVICE EVEN STAGED "MEETINGS" THAT WERE TAKEN FROM OUR HIDDEN THOUGHTS!
ZAP
ZIP
SO THINGS RETURN TO NORMAL AT THE DAILY PLANET ... ALMOST...
AW!
BLOB!
AW!
GREAT CAESAR'S GHOST! YOU ALL WORKING LATE AGAIN TONIGHT?
;SIGH;
;SIGH;
;SIGH;
DON'T YOU EVER GO OUT AND HAVE FUN ANY-MORE?
THIS IS ABOUT ALL THE FUN WE CAN HANDLE AT THE MOMENT, CHIEF!
PRESS ROOM
THE END

A Blonde Goddess scan.